

Food for Thought

May 2025

Serving Meals 'Family Style'

Your child can learn new skills by offering your meals through family style service. Family style service means that you place foods in serving bowls and on plates and pass them around the table so that everyone, including children, can serve themselves and talk with others at mealtimes. Family style meals can help your child:



- Build confidence with practice passing and serving foods.
- Strengthen the small muscles in your child's hands.
- Decide how much to eat. Typically, young children are in touch with how hungry they are and can serve their food knowing how much they need.
- Talk and connect with others

Some tips for Family Style Meals include:

- Place each food on its own serving plate or bowl. You can start small by choosing one food item to pass around the table. For young children choose small serving dishes that they can manage for passing and serving from.
- Sit down together. Turn off the television and put down the phones for fewer distractions.
- Pass each serving plate or bowl around to each person at the table. Help young children pass the bowl or plate if needed.
- Let each person serve their own food. Teach children to keep the bowl on the table when serving themselves. Use the serving spoon to scoop the food.
- Talk with one another. Ask each other questions. Here are some ideas for conversation starters:
 - What made you feel happy today?
 - What did you have to eat at lunch today?
 - What's your favorite veggie? Why?
 - Tell me one thing you learned today.
 - What made you laugh today?



Support Young Children at Mealtime:

1. Sometimes new foods take time. Children don't always like new foods right away. You may need to offer a food more than 10 times before your child might like it and that is okay.
2. Patience works better than pressure. Offer your children new foods. Then, let them choose how much to eat. Children are more likely to enjoy food when eating it is their own choice.
3. Accept that it may be messy at first. It will take practice for children to learn to serve themselves. But the mess is worth the benefits. Letting them continue to practice will strengthen their skills— creating less mess in the long run.

Creamsicle Yogurt Popsicles

- 1 quart low fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 can frozen orange juice concentrate (6 ounce can)

1. Stir all the ingredients together.
2. Spoon into small waxed paper cups. Insert wooden craft sticks or plastic spoons in the center of each popsicle.
3. Freeze about 2 to 3 hours depending on the size of the popsicle.
4. Enjoy!



Fruit Pizza

- English Muffin (try whole grain)
- 2 Tablespoons sliced strawberries
- 2 Tablespoons crushed pineapple
- 2 Tablespoons reduced fat or fat-free cream cheese
- 2 Tablespoons blueberries

1. Split open the English muffin and toast the halves until lightly browned.
2. Spread cream cheese on both halves.
3. Divide the fruit between the two muffin halves and arrange on top of cream cheese.
4. These are best when served immediately. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



Mashed Avocado Toast

- 2 slices whole-wheat or whole-grain bread, lightly toasted
- 1/2 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced
- Lemon or lime wedges
- pinch of pepper

1. Put the toast on a plate and top each piece with half the avocado slices.
2. Use the fork to gently mash them.
3. Sprinkle with a pinch of pepper and squeeze a lemon or lime wedge over each slice. Serve right away.



Sources: https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/nibbles_familymeals_eng.pdf; <https://snapedny.org/kid-friendly-recipes/> retrieved 4/28/25

Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
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